

# 2001 Inland Empire Annual Survey



Prepared by:

Shel Bockman, Max Neiman, and Barbara Sirotnik

## **THE 2001 INLAND EMPIRE ANNUAL SURVEY**

**We would like to thank the following organizations who  
generously contributed to this survey:**

### **SPONSORS:**

**Riverside County Transportation Commission  
San Bernardino Associated Governments**

### **PATRONS:**

**City of San Bernardino  
CSUSB**

**Inland Empire Economic Partnership  
Presley Center/UCR**

**Riverside County Superintendent of Schools  
San Bernardino County Superintendent of Schools**

### **SUPPORTER:**

**San Bernardino Co. Jobs and Employment Services Dept.**

# INTRODUCTION

The Inland Empire Research Consortium (IERC) is pleased to present its 2001 Inland Empire Annual Survey of residents in Riverside and San Bernardino counties. The IERC represents a partnership between the Institute of Applied Research and Policy Analysis at California State University San Bernardino (CSUSB) and the Center for Social and Behavioral Sciences Research at University of California Riverside (UCR).

The purpose of the **Inland Empire Annual Survey** is to provide policy-related research that bears on issues important to the Inland Empire region. The Inland Empire Annual Survey provides decision-makers with objective, accurate and current information for:

- ♦ **evaluating key public and private sector services and activities** (e.g., retail services, health care, education, transportation)
- ♦ **describing the public's current views as well as changes over time** in public perceptions of such issues as: quality of life, the state of the local economy, perceptions of the region as a place to live and work, the greatest problems and issues (e.g., crime, pollution, immigration) facing the Inland Empire, commuting, traffic congestion, and promotion of economic development
- ♦ **providing a regional focus** for the on-going discussion of key local/regional issues, and
- ♦ **disseminating a coherent picture of Inland Empire views, beliefs, and demographic characteristics** to key decision makers within and outside the region, thus enabling comparisons to other regions.

The Inland Empire Annual Survey also includes (on a space available basis), some *proprietary items* designed to meet specific information needs of some sponsors within the Inland Empire.

Apart from the objectives listed above, the IERC is committed to promoting regionalism and cooperation, and to projecting the Inland Empire onto the radar screen of other “significant actors” in the State. It is our hope that the Inland Empire Annual Survey is and will continue to be a valuable area resource for initiating community discourse and helping to inform public policy, officials, and citizens.

## THE QUESTIONNAIRE

Questionnaire items were selected on the following basis: Several questions were incorporated from previous annual surveys of Riverside and San Bernardino counties which were designed to track changes over time in the residents' perceptions about their quality of life and economic well-being, their views about the pressing issues of the day, and their ratings of public services and agencies. In addition, a number of standard demographic questions were included for tracking purposes and for cross tabulation of findings. Tracking questions, of course, provide public agencies and business with trend data often needed in policy making and outcome assessments. These questions are also valuable in comparing the two-county area with other counties in the state and nation. A number of sponsors also submitted questions for their proprietary use. Finally, the researchers, in consultation with sponsors, also added questions concerning current issues which have policy and research implications. A draft copy of the questionnaire was submitted to the sponsors for their approval and modified where warranted. A Spanish version of the questionnaire was also produced. The survey instrument was then pre-tested, and some minor changes to the wording and order of some items were made. The questionnaire is attached as Appendix I.

## SAMPLING METHODS

Telephone survey respondents were randomly selected from a comprehensive sample frame consisting of all telephone working blocks which contain residential telephone numbers in Riverside and San Bernardino Counties. This is a standard random sampling approach for studies of this nature. In order to ensure accuracy of findings, 2,695 residents were surveyed from the two-county area for a 95 percent level of confidence and an accuracy of approximately plus/minus 1.9 percent for overall two-county findings.

Sample size in each of the counties was different due to the over-sampling of some of the regional zones, and also due to the fact that the City of San Bernardino contracted for a higher sample size so that generalizations could be made to the City as whole. As a result, 1,548 residents of San Bernardino County were surveyed, for an accuracy of a plus or minus 2.7 percent and 95 percent level of confidence. The sample size for Riverside County was 1,147 residents, for an accuracy of plus or minus 2.9 percent and a 95% level of confidence. **In order**

**to remove the effects of the over-sampling, weighting factors were applied to the data. Thus the number of cases reported in the data tables is adjusted to be 1,000 for each county rather than the actual sample sizes reported above.**

Telephone interviews were conducted by the Institute of Applied Research at California State University, San Bernardino using computer assisted telephone interviewing (CATI) equipment and software. The surveys were conducted between November 14, 2001 and January 15, 2002.

## **INTRODUCTION TO FINDINGS**

This section presents the major findings from this year's Annual Survey. Findings are generally presented for the two-county area (Inland Empire) as a whole. ***This report concentrates on general findings that apply either to the Inland Empire as a whole or to Riverside or San Bernardino counties individually. Although this report will discuss several sub-groups below the county level, there will be separate, subsequent reports that focus on differences among areas within each of the counties and the relationship between background measures, such as income, education, and occupation with policy preferences and attitudes towards various projects and programs.***

As was the case in previous surveys there are remarkably few differences between the opinions of respondents in the two counties when viewed in the aggregate. In general, therefore, the findings are applicable to the two-county area at large. In those few instances where there exist significant differences between the two counties, such dissimilarities will be noted and discussed in detail. In addition, this report includes a sufficient number of data points (5 surveys, conducted from 1997 to 2001) to conduct more extensive and more valid trend analyses than in previous reports, both for the two-county area as a whole and for each individual county.

On the other hand, there are more differences *within* each county than there are *between* counties. Regional differences within each county are noted in detail in our upcoming Special Edition Zone-Specific Reports for each of the two counties.

Finally, as noted in the preceding section, the tables in the data display and in the following sections of the report reflect a weighting scheme to correct for over-sampling of certain geographic areas in both counties. Throughout this report, therefore, when we refer to the number of respondents indicating a particular view (a number that is a weighted figure), the

actual number of respondents may differ from the adjusted figure reported in the table. For a full data display of findings, see Appendix II.

## COMMUTING AND TRANSPORTATION ISSUES

**OVERVIEW:** *Commuting and transportation issues continue to become more pressing, reflected in a variety of ways – the length of commutes, the perception of congestion, concern over the quality of local streets and roads, and strong preferences for constructing more freeway infrastructure to relieve congestion. Respondents suggest that there is considerable willingness to support traffic improvements that clearly are directed at improving traffic congestion, including approving a renewal of transportation sales taxes in both counties. Both counties’ respondents overwhelmingly work within their respective counties, with total commuting times for the day within the one hour or less travel time. Respondents are overwhelmingly committed to policies that facilitate the use of the car to get to work. There is some support for public transportation, but it is modest. Respondents clearly prefer transportation improvement strategies which focus on car usage.*

The length of reported commuting times has remained fairly constant over time (Table 1). The key observation, however, is that a substantial majority (58.7%) of the Inland Empire respondents had commuting times of less than one hour, and during the previous years the proportion of commuters in the “less than 1 hour” category has remained fairly constant, varying within 2-3 percentage points. There are virtually no differences between the counties regarding these commute times.

**Table 1: Commuting Time, To And From Work**

| Year of Survey     | Less<br>Than 1<br>Hour<br>% | 1 to <<br>2<br>Hours<br>% | 2 to <<br>3<br>Hours<br>% | 3 to <<br>4<br>Hours<br>% | 4<br>Hours<br>Or<br>More<br>% |
|--------------------|-----------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|-------------------------------|
| 1997 Annual Survey | 56.8                        | 23.3                      | 11.6                      | 4.4                       | 3.6                           |
| 1998 Annual Survey | 60.1                        | 23.4                      | 10.8                      | 3.8                       | 2.0                           |
| 1999 Annual Survey | 61.7                        | 22.7                      | 8.5                       | 4.6                       | 2.5                           |
| 2000 Annual Survey | 58.9                        | 23.0                      | 11.3                      | 4.8                       | 1.9                           |
| 2001 Annual Survey | 58.7                        | 19.9                      | 11.9                      | 2.2                       | 2.4                           |

The overwhelming majority of those respondents who commute to work report that they travel to work within their own county (Table 2). This pattern has been noted in previous Annual Surveys and it continues this year. Last year, the proportion of Riverside County respondents indicating that they commuted to work within their home county was nearly 72%, while this year it is about 70%. San Bernardino County patterns remain relatively unchanged, with 69% of San Bernardino County commuters from this year's survey indicating that they drive to work within their home county, versus 70% from last year. Of course, another way of looking at the data is that approximately 3 out of every 10 commuters travel to work destinations that are *outside* their own county to work.

Riverside County commuters who travel outside their county to work appear to be distributed among San Bernardino (9.9%), Orange (9.5%), Los Angeles (4.7%), and San Diego (2.9%) counties. As reported in previous annual surveys, the largest proportion of the San Bernardino County commuters who travel outside the county go to Los Angeles County (16.1%), with the next highest proportion traveling to Riverside County (7.9%), followed by Orange County (3.8%). A relatively small proportion of San Bernardino County commuters (0.3%) head for San Diego County. Again, these findings are relatively consistent with previous Annual Surveys.

**Table 2: Distribution of  
Commuting Destinations, 1999-2002\***

| Work Destination<br>County | Riverside<br>County |      |      | San Bernardino<br>County |      |      |
|----------------------------|---------------------|------|------|--------------------------|------|------|
|                            | 1999                | 2000 | 2001 | 1999                     | 2000 | 2001 |
| Riverside                  | 72.5                | 72.3 | 70.1 | 5.7                      | 7.1  | 7.9  |
| San Bernardino             | 8.6                 | 9.4  | 9.9  | 73.3                     | 70.1 | 69.3 |
| Orange                     | 7.2                 | 7.2  | 9.5  | 3.2                      | 4.4  | 3.8  |
| Los Angeles                | 5.0                 | 5.1  | 4.7  | 14.8                     | 15.3 | 16.1 |
| San Diego                  | 2.9                 | 4.0  | 2.9  | 0.4                      | 0.6  | 0.3  |
| Other                      | 3.9                 | 2.0  | 2.0  | 2.5                      | 2.5  | 1.9  |

\*Numbers in cells are % of respondents.

In recent years the Annual Survey has asked Riverside County respondents how much they believe that traffic is a problem. This year, the question focuses on traffic generally, and the results indicate that while 40% of the respondents indicate that traffic in general is a large problem, 43% indicate it is only "somewhat" of a problem, and 14% indicate that traffic is "no

problem at all.” In previous years, the item distinguished between freeway and local traffic, with relatively small proportions of respondents indicating that traffic on local roads was a large problem. However, in the previous two annual surveys, 34% and 35% respectively indicated that freeway traffic is a large problem. These findings, in addition to other findings in this report, continue to show the salience of traffic issues in Riverside resident’s perceptions of the county as a place to live.

Energy prices have become less pressing as an issue in the past year. Last year, respondents were asked the question: “Has the increase in gas prices during the past year caused you to *drive less*?” This year’s question (asked only in Riverside County) was a slight variation, focusing more on driving habits in general: “Has the increase in gas prices during the last two years caused you to *change your driving habits*?” The results are reported in Table 3.

**Table 3. “Has the increase in gas prices during the last two years caused you to change your driving habits?”**

|                 | <b>Riverside County<br/>(% of Respondents)</b> |             |
|-----------------|--|-------------|
| <b>Response</b> | <b>2000</b>                                    | <b>2001</b> |
| Yes             | 42.8   | 32.6        |
| No              | 55.6   | 64.8        |

When those third of the respondents who answered “yes” were queried about *how* they had changed their driving habits, 23% indicated that they “don’t drive as much,” 15% travel less for pleasure (trips, vacations), and 14% report carpooling and/or vanpooling. These findings, when coupled with other findings listed in the appendix, make it clear that a common solution to coping with increasing gas prices is to simply drive less. However as noted in Table 3, this year there is a significant drop in the percentage driving less and/or changing driving habits. Yet this figure is still sizable even though the price of gas dropped in 2001 from the peak prices in 2000. The erratic up-and-down oscillation of energy prices has evidently become part of the general rhythm of commuting life, and people have made behavioral changes that continue to “stick.”

Respondents were also asked for their opinions about how to improve traffic conditions in their area. Respondents were read a list of five transportation strategies and asked to indicate which one strategy they felt was the *most* important. There were no significant differences between the counties on this item and the results are as follows (Table 4).



**Table 4. Which Transportation Improvement Strategies Considered MOST Important Among Inland Empire Survey Respondents (2000)**

| <b>Strategy</b>                           | <b>% Considering Strategy MOST Important</b> |
|---|--|
| Build/widen freeways                      | 32.0   |
| Repair/maintain existing streets/freeways | 17.4   |
| Increase public bus frequency and routes  | 16.4   |
| Build/widen local streets and roads       | 13.2   |
| Increase commuter rail service and routes | 12.7   |
| Other                                     | 3.7  |
| Don't Know/refused                        | 4.7  |

In the previous year, respondents appeared to favor investing in freeway construction and improvements, and this year continues the pattern. The recent Annual Survey altered the wording on this issue slightly, however, it is clear that by a substantial margin the respondents seem to favor an emphasis on freeway improvement (Table 5).

**Table 5. Transportation Improvement Strategies Considered MOST Important (2001)**

| <b>Strategy</b>                        | <b>% Considering Strategy MOST Important</b> |
|--|--|
| Build/widen freeways                   | 26.8   |
| Repair and maintain existing streets   | 16.8   |
| Build/widen local streets and roads    | 15.3   |
| Increase commuter rail service         | 12.1   |
| Improve efficiency of existing system* | 11.5   |
| Increase public bus service            | 8.5  |
| Don't Know/refused                     | 4.6  |
| Build new toll roads                   | 4.4  |

*\*Efficiency refers to carpool lanes, time signals, ridesharing, etc.*

The results in the previous two tables emphasize strongly the overall preference for increasing the capacity of freeways by building and widening freeways. Clearly the respondents are less optimistic about or supportive of the strategies involving public transportation, whether rail or bus, as means of improving traffic problems.

## **SPECIFIC TRANSPORTATION ITEMS FOR SAN BERNARDINO COUNTY AND RIVERSIDE COUNTY**

Respondents were asked about issues that are specific to their respective counties.

Following are some key findings by county.

### **SAN BERNARDINO FINDINGS**

San Bernardino respondents were asked about having used Measure I-funded projects within the past year, and the following table reports the percentage “yes” responses for the individual projects.

**Table 6. Percentage Respondents Indicating They Used  
Measure I-Funded Projects in the Past Year**

| <b><u>Measure I-Funded Project</u></b>                      | <b><u>% Yes</u></b> |
|---|---------------------|
| Metrolink Train   | 18.8                |
| Interstate 10 carpool lanes in<br>Ontario and Montclair     | 61.1                |
| Route 71 in Chino/Chino Hills                               | 39.2                |
| Route 210 in Rancho Cucamonga<br>and Fontana                | 53.8                |
| Local Bus Service   | 18.1                |
| Bear Valley Rd in Victorville<br>Apple Valley, and Hesperia | 38.8                |

The most used of the Measure I-funded projects are, respectively the I-10 carpool lanes, the Route 210 in Rancho Cucamonga/Fontana, Route 71 in Chino/Chino Hills, and Bear Valley Road. Metrolink and bus services appear, in contrast, relatively less utilized.

When asked whether they would vote yes or no to continue Measure I, 68.2% of the

respondents indicated “yes”, while 20.0% said no, with 11.8% either undecided or unwilling to say how they would vote. In this survey, the respondents were obviously informed which key Measure I projects were being funded, since they were asked whether they had used any of them. *It might be useful to assess how much support for Measure I there is if the respondent is not informed in advance of the projects it funds.*

San Bernardino County respondents were also asked how important it would be for Measure I funds to be spent on freeways, bus service, more Metrolink service, or more local street improvements, and the results are reported in the following table.

**Table 7. How Important That Measure I Funds be Spent on Alternative Projects**

| <b>Alternative Projects</b> | <b>Very Important</b> | <b>Somewhat Important</b> | <b>Not Important</b> | <b>Don't Know/ Refused</b> |
|-----------------------------|-----------------------|---------------------------|----------------------|----------------------------|
| Freeways                    | 48.5                  | 30.6                      | 18.4                 | 2.5                        |
| Bus Service                 | 42.0                  | 32.0                      | 18.5                 | 7.5                        |
| Metrolink Service           | 46.7                  | 28.9                      | 14.8                 | 9.6                        |
| Local Street Improvements   | 76.4                  | 17.1                      | 5.2                  | 1.3                        |

Interestingly freeways, bus service and Metrolink service receive roughly similar levels of support for their importance as objects of Measure I funding, despite the fact that relatively few commuters use either Metrolink or the bus service. Does this pattern reflect a sense that Metrolink and bus service operate as “back-up” for the freeway-based commuter? Or do respondents believe that Metrolink and buses help to relieve some of the freeway congestion? Or is there a sense that people who need to use buses or the trains ought to receive the general support of the larger commuting public? Equally important is the fact that San Bernardino residents are very concerned about local street improvements, substantially more than other alternative projects.

There continues to be expressed wariness, however, in the sense that respondents do not favor permitting simple majorities to approve such measures as Measure I. Only 29.5% indicated that a simple majority should suffice to approve such measures, while only 22.4% of the respondents support a 55% to 60% required majority. Nearly half (48.1%) of the respondents favor a two-thirds approval requirement to renew taxes such as Measure I.

A number of items were asked regarding emergency call boxes, and the following summarizes the results of those items:

**Table 8. Findings Regarding Views on Call Boxes**

- 83% of the respondents have not used a call box within the past two years. But this figure is not surprising since call boxes are only to be used in emergency situations such as vehicle breakdowns or accident reports.
- Of those who did not use the call boxes within the past two years, most reported they had no need to use them since they had no emergency (77%) or used their cell phones instead (18%).
- Of the 160 who DID use the call boxes, 57% used them in San Bernardino County, 17% in Los Angeles County, 10% in Riverside County, and 6% in Orange County, with the rest of the respondents spread around the state.
- Of those who DID use the call boxes, the vast majority (86%) had no problem using them. The remainder expressed difficulties such as failing to get an operator, finding that the box was not working, or that the operator was discourteous or not helpful
- **86% of the respondents (regardless of whether they had used the call boxes or not), believe it is “very important” to have call boxes**

Finally East and West Valley respondents were asked about whether they would use a daily train service from Redlands to San Bernardino and destinations beyond, and 47.6% indicated that they would use such a service, while an almost equal proportion, 48.2%, said they would not. Of those who indicated “yes,” in order of frequency, the following areas were enumerated by more than 5% of the respondents as their likely destinations of such a service – City of San Bernardino (36%), Los Angeles (26%), and Riverside (9%).

## **RIVERSIDE COUNTY FINDINGS**

A growing percentage of Riverside County respondents are finding freeway traffic to be a large problem. The proportion of Annual Survey respondents indicating that freeway traffic is a large problem has grown steadily in Riverside County from 33% in 1999, to 35% in 2000, to

40% in the current 2001 survey.

Additionally, Riverside County respondents were asked to give their impressions concerning a number of transportation organizations and programs – Caltrans, 91 Express Toll Lanes, Riverside County Transportation Commission (RCTC), California Highway Patrol (CHP), Metrolink, Riverside County Integrated Plan, RTA (asked of western Riverside County respondents), and SunLine (asked of Coachella Valley respondents), Freeway Service Patrol, and

**Table 9. Favorable/Unfavorable Impressions  
of Transportation Organizations and Policies**

|                           | <b>Favorable</b> | <b>Unfavorable</b> | <b>No Opinion</b> | <b>D.K/Ref.</b> |
|---------------------------|------------------|--------------------|-------------------|-----------------|
| 91 Toll Lanes             | 46.7             | 27.3               | 18.4              | 7.5             |
| Caltrans                  | 64.1             | 12.3               | 18.3              | 5.3             |
| RTA                       | 57.4             | 10.1               | 22.0              | 10.5            |
| RCTC                      | 24.8             | 8.1                | 46.4              | 20.8            |
| CHP                       | 87.1             | 6.1                | 5.1               | 1.7             |
| Metrolink                 | 65.2             | 5.8                | 20.2              | 8.7             |
| SunLine                   | 60.1             | 5.4                | 16.8              | 17.7            |
| Freeway Service Patrol    | 38.6             | 4.4                | 18.1              | 38.8            |
| Riverside Integrated Plan | 10.4             | 2.7                | 60.0              | 26.9            |
| Club Ride                 | 12.4             | 2.0                | 18.1              | 67.4            |

Club Ride. The organizations/programs and the respondents' favorable/unfavorable ratings are summarized in the preceding table (Table 9). The toll lanes received the highest unfavorable rating, but there was considerable regional variation. Specifically, about a third of respondents in the Corona/Norco, Riverside/Moreno Valley, and Banning/San Jacinto Zones viewed the toll lanes as unfavorable, as did about 27% of the I-15 Corridor area respondents. Only 14% of Coachella Valley respondents viewed the toll lanes unfavorably, and many of the respondents in the Coachella Valley Zone had "no opinion." On the other hand, all that being said, **it is important to note that over 50% of respondents in the Corona/Norco, Riverside/Moreno Valley, and I-15 Corridor Zone had favorable impressions of the toll lanes.**

The following is a summary of a host of items probing Riverside County respondents' reactions to a series of items relating to support for various transportation programs and policies.

**Table 10. Summary of Findings Regarding Riverside County Respondents' Views Regarding Selected Transportation Related Policies and Programs**

- Approximately 64% of Riverside County residents indicate they would vote yes to extend Measure A which is a local ½ cent sales tax for transportation projects and services. This support level is near the two-thirds supermajority necessary for an extension of the measure, despite no mentioning of the specific projects which would be funded with a sales tax extension. Moreover, 24 percent of respondents opposed an extension leaving an undecided figure of 12 percent. These figures are virtually unchanged from the previous Annual Survey.
- Riverside County residents continue to support carpool or HOV lanes. More than 86% of the county's residents consider carpool lanes to be either helpful or very helpful. This is a very similar finding to the results of last year's survey.
- In addition to carpool lanes, Riverside County residents appreciate the presence of roadside call boxes. Although cell phones have become commonplace in cars traveling local highways, most respondents believe it is important (78%) or somewhat important (16%) to continue making call boxes available.
- There is almost an even split between Riverside County respondents who support and those who oppose using tolls to build new corridors *between counties*; 45.7% say they support and 45.8% say they would not support such tolls.
- A notable majority of Riverside County respondents oppose using tolls to build new corridors *within the county*, at least as portrayed in the survey examples (Winchester to Temecula or Corona/Lake Elsinore to Hemet); 54% of the respondents say they would not support such tolls.

Riverside County respondents were also asked about how to manage the dramatic increase in truck and rail traffic that will occur in the region. Specifically, respondents were

asked, “Where should resources be concentrated for improving goods movement traffic?”. The following is the summary of reactions to the three options posed for the respondents. The data indicate perhaps surprising support for expending resources for exclusive truck lanes.

Apparently respondents do not find railroad crossings a serious or general transportation issue; perhaps they believe these costs should more properly be borne by the railroads. The airport issue is a bit more interesting and complex, since in actuality it is not at all clear whether the creation of a major air cargo facility at March Air Reserve Base or at other airports or former military facilities will improve truck traffic circulation or increase truck traffic.

**Table 11. “Where should resources be concentrated for improving goods movement traffic?”**

|  |
|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 53% of the respondents feel resources should be concentrated on creating new freeway lanes exclusively for trucks</li> <li>• 23% of the respondents prefer to have resources devoted to improving airport facilities such as at March Air Reserve Base to handle air cargo</li> <li>• 10% believe resources should be devoted to eliminating delays and improving safety at railroad crossings</li> </ul> |
|--|

## RATINGS OF THE COUNTIES

**OVERVIEW:** *As in previous surveys, a substantial majority of Inland Empire residents continue to rate their respective counties as a good place to live. Riverside County residents also continue the pattern of being somewhat more positive about their county than are San Bernardino residents.*

**Table 12. Ratings of the Respective Counties as a Place to Live**

|  | Riverside<br>County<br>% | San<br>Bernardino<br>County<br>% | Inland<br>Empire<br>% |
|--|--------------------------|----------------------------------|-----------------------|
|  |                          |                                  |                       |

|                      |      |      |      |
|----------------------|------|------|------|
| Very Good            | 31.6 | 18.2 | 24.9 |
| Fairly Good          | 49.6 | 53.7 | 51.7 |
| Neither Good nor Bad | 13.6 | 18.6 | 16.1 |
| Fairly Bad           | 3.2  | 5.1  | 4.2  |
| Very Bad             | 1.1  | 3.4  | 2.2  |
| DON'T KNOW, REFUSED  | 1.0  | 1.0  | 1.0  |

Among Riverside County respondents, over 81% indicate that their county is a very good or fairly good place to live, while only about 72% of the San Bernardino County residents feel that way. Although large majorities in both counties express very positive ratings for their counties, there remains a noticeable gap between counties, with Riverside County residents somewhat more positive overall and less negative. This is a pattern that has persisted since 1997 (See Table 13). It is also worth noting that there is apparent improvement in San Bernardino County ratings, with a modest, but apparent, 4.5 increase in “very good” to “fairly good” responses over the previous survey.

**Table 13. Trend – Proportion of Inland Empire Respondents Indicating Their Respective Counties Are Very Good or Fairly Good Places To Live**

|                    | Riverside<br>County<br>% | San Bernardino<br>County<br>% | Inland<br>Empire<br>% |
|--------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------------|-----------------------|
| 1997 Annual Survey | 75.9                     | 63.2                          | 69.0                  |
| 1998 Annual Survey | 81.1                     | 67.2                          | 73.7                  |
| 1999 Annual Survey | 78.9                     | 68.6                          | 73.8                  |
| 2000 Annual Survey | 80.4                     | 67.4                          | 73.9                  |
| 2001 Annual Survey | 81.2                     | 71.9                          | 76.6                  |

**OVERVIEW:** *Respondents in both counties use similar criteria (nice living area, good climate, affordable housing, and “not crowded”) to express their positive assessments of their county as a place to live. These findings are consistent with previous surveys.*

The following table indicates that respondents in both counties consider pretty much the same factors in positively assessing the two counties.

**Table 14. Positive Factors Mentioned About the County**

|  | Riverside<br>County | San<br>Bernardino | Total |
|--|---------------------|-------------------|-------|
|--|---------------------|-------------------|-------|



|                                    |     | County |     |
|------------------------------------|-----|--------|-----|
| Good area, location                | 301 | 329    | 630 |
| Good climate, weather              | 204 | 145    | 350 |
| Affordable housing                 | 93  | 100    | 193 |
| Not crowded                        | 76  | 65     | 140 |
| Affordable cost of living          | 49  | 50     | 99  |
| Public transportation/Less traffic | 37  | 57     | 94  |
| Friendly people                    | 46  | 39     | 85  |
| Schools, universities              | 28  | 28     | 56  |
| Less crime, feel safer             | 27  | 24     | 51  |

The responses in the previous table are based on the open-ended, freely provided comments of the respondents.

***OVERVIEW: Smog was by far the most important negative factor in affecting respondents' ratings in both counties. Riverside and San Bernardino County respondents differed in the second factor listed, with traffic the 2<sup>nd</sup> highest concern in Riverside County and crime the 2<sup>nd</sup> highest concern among San Bernardino County residents. If one includes poor public transportation and bus routes as a "transportation" issue, the total transportation issue number for Riverside County would make it the most important concern in that county.***

**Table 15: Negative Factors Mentioned About the County**

|                                       | Riverside County | San Bernardino County | Total |
|---------------------------------------|------------------|-----------------------|-------|
| Smog/Air pollution                    | 160              | 149                   | 309   |
| Crime/gang activity                   | 50               | 132                   | 182   |
| Traffic/freeways/commuting            | 115              | 54                    | 170   |
| Drugs                                 | 60               | 69                    | 129   |
| Lack of entertainment                 | 51               | 47                    | 98    |
| Poor public transportation/Bus routes | 57               | 29                    | 85    |
| Weather/climate                       | 54               | 23                    | 77    |
| Overpopulated                         | 48               | 27                    | 75    |
| Not enough job opportunities          | 24               | 47                    | 71    |

The above findings on the "most negative factors about the county" are generally congruent with last year's findings, with one notable exception: smog was last year's "second place" negative in both counties, and that factor has risen to first place. The perennial problem

of crime and gang activity still remains salient, especially in San Bernardino County. Yet while crime/gang activity is still salient for Riverside County respondents, it is clearly *less* salient in that county than in previous years. It is also important to note that drug problems in both counties are mentioned at approximately similar levels, and when added to the general crime domain highlight the persistence of this policy area as a matter of concern in both counties. The difference in the respondents' perceptions in the two counties might not be rooted in the actual fear of crime, and one possible cause for the difference is in perceptions about pockets of perceived crime rates rather than in overall perceptions of personal risk. This possibility is highlighted in the following section.

## **FEAR OF CRIME AND CRIME RELATED ISSUES**

**OVERVIEW:** *The level of fear regarding crime among all respondents seems to have dramatically declined. Other than last year's figure (which may have been an anomaly), the fear of crime has declined steadily since 1997.*

In our previous report, we noted that fear of being the victim of a serious crime had generally declined since 1997. Last year the shift down reversed some, although this year the downward rate of the fear of crime has continued with a very substantial drop. As shown in Table 16, the proportion of Inland Empire respondents indicating they are somewhat fearful or very fearful of being the victim of a serious crime has plummeted by over 10 percent since the last Annual Survey. There are only minor differences in perceptions of respondents in each of the two counties.

**Table 16. Percentage of Respondents Indicating That They Are Very Fearful or Somewhat Fearful of Being The Victim of A Serious Crime**

| <b>Year of Survey</b> | <b>%</b> |
|-----------------------|----------|
| 1997 Annual Survey    | 42.1     |
| 1998 Annual Survey    | 39.2     |
| 1999 Annual Survey    | 35.2     |
| 2000 Annual Survey    | 39.8     |
| 2001 Annual Survey    | 29.3     |

The data derived from the "fear-of-crime" question, in concert with other items in the

survey, suggest that Inland Empire residents are becoming considerably less concerned and less fearful about crime. Of course, perceptions of crime as a problem are notoriously affected by news coverage.

## ECONOMIC EVALUATIONS AND FUTURE PROSPECTS

**OVERVIEW:** *The findings indicate a mild decline in the proportion of residents who believe they are “better off” economically, reflecting, perhaps, the moderate recession in the state and nation. The decline in the “better off” category and increase in the “worse-off” category are a bit more notable in Riverside County, although the differences are small. Nevertheless, the overall picture is one of an optimistic population, with individuals who are enthusiastic about the future, and confident in the security of their jobs. Although there are some modest inter-county differences in some indicators of economic optimism and well being, the trend in both counties indicates sustained optimism.*

This year’s Annual Survey data suggest that perhaps the steady improvements in the finances of families in the region peaked several years ago, with 42.8% of 1998 respondents saying they were “better off” than a year before, vs. 36% this year in this year’s report. On the flip side, there has been a notable increase in the proportion of respondents indicating that they are “worse off” (from 11% in 1998 to 15% in this year’s report). This reversal of financial fortunes may simply, however, be a function of the period during which the survey was conducted (that is, soon after the September 11 terrorist attack on the World Trade Center).

With regard to an assessment of the *overall economy* in their respective counties, about 49% of the Riverside and 38% of the San Bernardino respondents felt that their county’s economy was “good” or “excellent.” San Bernardino respondents were somewhat less positive, with 15% indicating the county economy was poor, while only 9% of the Riverside County respondents felt that way.

**Table 17. Perceptions Of Inland Empire Respondents  
Regarding Finances Compared to Year Ago**

| Year of Survey    | Better Off<br>% | Same<br>% | Worse Off<br>% |
|-------------------|-----------------|-----------|----------------|
| 1997Annual Survey | 33.6            | 51.0      | 15.3           |
| 1998Annual Survey | 42.8            | 45.2      | 11.3           |
| 1999Annual Survey | 42.5            | 46.4      | 9.7            |

|                    |      |      |      |
|--------------------|------|------|------|
| 2000 Annual Survey | 40.8 | 47.7 | 10.6 |
| 2001 Annual Survey | 36.0 | 48.0 | 15.1 |

When asked whether household income “is enough so that you can save money or buy some extras, just enough to pay the bills, or not enough” we find that there is negligible change over last year. However, there is a noticeable, if ever so slight, increase in the proportion of respondents indicating that there is not enough money in the household to pay bills and obligations. Although it is unwarranted to ring alarms it is worth looking closely at trends over the coming year to see if these data are heralding a change in the region’s economy. The findings (Table 18) suggest that for many Inland Empire residents (55.9%), household income is either just enough or not enough to pay bills, with no room for extras. This pattern has been

**Table 18. Responses Concerning Whether Household Income Is Sufficient**

| <b>Year of Survey</b>   | <b>Save and Buy Extras %</b> | <b>To Pay Bills %</b> | <b>Not Enough %</b> |
|-------------------------|------------------------------|-----------------------|---------------------|
| 1997-1998 Annual Survey | 34.1                         | 50.9                  | 15.0                |
| 1998-1999 Annual Survey | 41.7                         | 46.1                  | 10.2                |
| 1999-2000 Annual Survey | 41.7                         | 47.8                  | 9.7                 |
| 2000-2001 Annual Survey | 41.5                         | 45.4                  | 12.0                |
| 2001-2002 Annual Survey | 42.7                         | 44.6                  | 11.3                |

persistent for a number of years. Respondents who feel that their family incomes are sufficient to save and buy extras also has remained virtually unchanged from a statistical significance point of view.

The majority (53.9%) of the Inland Empire’s respondents indicated optimism about their financial future, with 54.6% of Riverside County respondents and 53.3% of the San Bernardino respondents feeling their families would be better off next year. These results have been fairly constant for at least three years, suggesting that there is a persistent optimism in place among Inland Empire residents.

As has been stated in previous reports Inland Empire respondents continue to be optimistic about their financial future, despite some small, but observable, decline in many people’s incomes during the previous year. Despite some economic reversal and the slowing economy, the vast proportion of Inland Empire respondents, regardless of county, were “not at

all concerned” about losing their job (74%). Nevertheless, it is also the case that there are significant pockets of insecurity and stress, despite the overall optimism. There is still a significant proportion of respondents with constrained incomes, who feel they are limited in purchasing “extras.”

## EVALUATIONS OF SELECTED PRIVATE AND PUBLIC SERVICES

**OVERVIEW:** *In general, Inland Empire respondents continue to show stability in their views regarding the private and public services included in previous Annual Surveys. Police/Sheriff services, shopping, and parks/recreation services are rated quite highly. On the other hand, street/road maintenance, entertainment, and transportation continue to be problem areas. Evaluations of public schools continue to decline among San Bernardino County respondents.*

Each year the Annual Survey includes questions regarding respondents’ evaluations of local services from both the private and public sectors. The data (Table 19) show relative stability over time in rankings, with only slightly fewer respondents rating services as “excellent” or “good” when compared with the previous survey.

**Table 19. Percent Rating Selected Public/Private Services as “Excellent” or “Good”**

|                  | <b>2001<br/>Annual Survey</b> |                        | <b>2001<br/>Annual<br/>Survey</b> | <b>2000<br/>Annual<br/>Survey</b> | <b>1999<br/>Annual<br/>Survey</b> | <b>1998<br/>Annual<br/>Survey</b> |
|------------------|-------------------------------|------------------------|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| SERVICE          | Riverside<br>County<br>%      | San<br>Bernardino<br>% | Inland<br>Empire<br>%             | Inland<br>Empire<br>%             | Inland<br>Empire<br>%             | Inland<br>Empire<br>%             |
| Shopping         | 70.8                          | 67.8                   | 69.2                              | 64.3                              | 68.4                              | 65.4                              |
| Police/Sheriff   | 72.0                          | 65.5                   | 68.7                              | 65.1                              | 69.1                              | 66.6                              |
| Parks/Recreation | 59.9                          | 57.7                   | 58.8                              | 60.3                              | 60.5                              | 57.5                              |
| Entertainment    | 49.6                          | 46.0                   | 47.9                              | 42.3                              | 49.3                              | 46.9                              |
| Public Schools   | 47.4                          | 45.3                   | 46.3                              | 43.5                              | 46.2                              | 48.7                              |
| Transportation   | 41.6                          | 41.6                   | 41.6                              | 37.1                              | NA                                | NA                                |
| Streets/Roads    | 42.7                          | 34.1                   | 38.4                              | 38.4                              | 42.5                              | 39.4                              |

Police/sheriff and shopping services continue to receive the highest rankings within each county. Parks and recreation services also continue to receive high marks.

Within Riverside County, the public school system received virtually the same evaluations as last year. In contrast, evaluations given by San Bernardino County respondents have varied over time (from 51.3% rating schools as “excellent” or “good” in 1998, to 46.2% in 1999, to 40.8% in 2000, to 45.3% in this report). The ratings of public schools may appear low at first glance, however, it is to be noted that respondents within both counties recorded the highest number of “don’t know” responses to this question. This suggests that within both counties the public school systems may wish to consider concentrated public relations campaign.

This year a few questions were submitted by the school districts of each county to probe respondents’ views regarding their local schools. When asked “What do you think is the best way to improve local public schools,” respondents indicated the need to increase teacher training (28.7%). Mentioned nearly as often were suggestions to “set higher standards for student’s academic achievement” (24.9%) and “set higher standards for student’s discipline” (22.2%). Interestingly, only about 17% felt that increasing school funding was the answer. This may, again, reflect respondents’ less-than-shining views of the economy as a whole and their own financial situation, or it may truly reflect opinions that the school system must “raise the bar” for academic standards (both in terms of teacher training and student performance).

Street and road maintenance services continue to be rated quite low among respondents of both counties. Continuing a trend from the last report, Riverside County respondents tend to be more positive about street and road maintenance than were San Bernardino County respondents, however it is to be noted that the rankings in both counties are relatively low. Entertainment is also given low marks, as is local transportation.

## **CONCLUDING REMARKS**

In this report we have provided a general overview of highlights of the 2001 Inland Empire Annual Survey. The reader is urged to review the full data display (attached) for the complete listing of survey results. Subsequent reports will address issues such as fair treatment by police and sheriffs, immigration, and other issues. Further, zone reports for each county will be published in the near future.

For questions about the Inland Empire Annual Survey, please feel free to call the authors: Shel Bockman (909-880-5733), Max Neiman (909-787-2196), and Barbara Sirotnik (909-880-5729).

# APPENDIX I

## Questionnaire

# APPENDIX II

## Data Display